



28 April 2022

Dr Leanne Beagley – Chief Executive Officer
Mental Health Australia

By email: Leanne.Beagley@mhaustralia.org

Cc: Nikki.hogan@mhaustralia.org

Dear Dr Beagley,

Thank you for your letter and for your kind wishes for the campaign.

In the past few years, I think we've all become more aware of the reach and the impact of mental ill health. We've all faced unusual situations and unfamiliar stress and the way that affects productivity and satisfaction has made it clear how important it is to have access to expert mental health care.

Your suggestion that every election issue comes back to mental health is compelling. As you note, the collective burdens generated by pandemic related upheaval and the anxieties that come with financial strains as cost of living climbs, mean that many of our most important decisions will play out in the mental well-being of millions of Australians. An Albanese Labor Government would take that responsibility with the gravity it warrants, and if we are elected on 21 May your Incoming Government Brief will be invaluable.

We have already announced some steps an Albanese Labor Government would take to strengthen mental health supports. We will strengthen our headspace networks, particularly in regional Australia, providing clinical and non-clinical services in under-resourced areas.

As a further boost to regional mental telehealth services, Labor will reinstate the 50 per cent Medicare loading for regional telehealth psychiatry mental health consultations that was abolished by the Morrison Government during the Omicron wave of the COVID pandemic.

In addition to those, our National Nurse and Midwife Health Service is an example of just the kind of policy thinking Mental Health Australia has been advocating. We've recognised that stress and burnout have become a significant threat to a key workforce in our health system. The services will deliver holistic, case-managed support with a focus on early intervention so nurses and midwives can avoid unnecessary burnout. In seeking to bolster the resilience of these workers, we are both strengthening the system and supporting the wellbeing of the individuals who have chosen to make a career in this vital sector.

Beyond these initiatives, Labor has made series of commitments to improve educational opportunities through TAFE and university, create more secure jobs and fix Australia's broken

aged care system, which as you note are critical to the mental health and wellbeing of many Australians.

Thank you again for your work and for the encouragement to view our policy decisions through the lens of mental health.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Erickson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Erickson
National Secretary
Australian Labor Party